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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU: VIEWS ON NOVEMBER 19-20 (GAERC)

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On November 15, POLOFF delivered reftel points to the Dutch MFA's EU Correspondent, Desiree Kopmels. Also on November 15, Stefan van Wersch, Director for EU external policy, and Rochus Pronk, Deputy EU Correspondent, reviewed Dutch priorities ahead of the November 19-20 GAERC during a briefing for representatives from the U.S., Croatia, Japan, Korea, Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey. Van Wersch focused on broad economic issues (para 2-3), and Pronk reviewed primarily political issues, including regional summits, the Balkans, Pakistan, Sudan/Darfur, Burma, ESDP, and the Middle East (para 3-10). END SUMMARY.

"Jumbo Council"

¶2. (SBU) Van Wersch noted that the plan to bring together Defense, Development and Foreign Ministers for this meeting reflects an evolution for the EU, an effort to combine hard and soft power to solve problems. The Netherlands believes most states have enough development assistance, but the Dutch will push for more security spending. The Dutch will propose a pilot project for Burundi that will also apply generally to fragile states and attempt to better divide labor among supporting states (i.e. EU) .

Economic Partnership Agreements

¶3. (SBU) Van Wersch explained that the EU states are obliged under a 1999 WTO ruling to renegotiate the "Cotonou Agreement," which targeted trade preferences for former colonies in Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP states). The broad goal is to finalize six trade agreements in the regions by 2008, the deadline set by the WTO. The primary Dutch goal is to avoid having any state get worse trade deals under the new agreements.

EU Summits

¶4. (SBU) For the China Summit, FM Verhagen has asked that human rights be given "special attention." The Dutch or the EU will raise concerns about Burma. Asked about the China Arms Embargo, Pronk quoted FM Verhagen, who told the Dutch parliament that there's been no change in the Dutch position because no developments in China warrant a change. Accordingly, there's no reason to put the issue on the GAERC agenda. For the summit with India, the Dutch want to update the cooperation agreement, and include important political clauses like human rights. The Dutch also want to raise child

labor and Burma. For the summit with Africa, The Dutch aim for a 2008-2010 EU-Africa Action Plan. The Dutch prefer that President Mugabe not attend, and the Dutch believe the Portuguese have made the EU's preference clear to Africa. However, if Mugabe attends, the Dutch expect an open dialogue on human rights and governance. The Dutch offered to engage Zimbabwe on behalf of the EU if Mugabe does attend.

Balkans

15. (SBU) In Kosovo, it's "crunch time." The Troika should do more, intensify efforts, perhaps holding a Dayton-like meeting. The November 17 elections should be watched closely. The Dutch are also concerned about Serbian interference. In Bosnia, the situation is more complicated now. The Dutch are concerned about the hold-up on the police agreement. They will support the UN high representative and the EU special representative. In Serbia, the Dutch feel the Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed too soon (NOTE: On November 16, the press reported that FM Verhagen delivered this message to Serbian FM Jeremic, explaining that the Netherlands will not sign until Serbia cooperates fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. END NOTE.).

Pakistan

16. (SBU) The Dutch are "deeply concerned" about the arrests and emergency declaration, though the planned elections are welcome. The Dutch will explain their suspension of some aid at the Council.

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Sudan/Darfur

17. (SBU) The Brussels meetings on Sudan/Darfur will include MODs and FMs. Sanctions are needed and should be on the table.

Burma

18. (SBU) The Dutch will continue "in the forefront" of those pushing for sanctions. The Dutch had hoped the EU would include measures against Burmese oil and gas interests as part of the EU's October 15 sanctions decision. Testifying before parliament on November 12, FM Verhagen reported said "maybe the time is right" for even tougher sanctions. Again, the Dutch will raise Burma at EU summits with China and India.

ESDP

19. (SBU) The Dutch are most concerned about the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) police mission to Afghanistan. It's been difficult to start, and the EU should apply these lessons elsewhere (e.g. Kosovo).

Middle East

10. (SBU) The EU will receive an action plan on Monday, but there's not enough time to act on it. The Dutch are particularly concerned about the border openings. One flower project in Gaza, for example, is stymied. The Council may offer short conclusions on Lebanon. On Iran, no decision is expected at this meeting, and the Dutch continue to support diplomacy, but also sanctions within the EU. On Iraq, the FM will attend the meeting with FM Zebari and ask about internally displaced persons and refugees.

Gallagher